



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

May 20, 2009

Mr. John Carman, Chair  
BRAC Implementation Committee  
101 Monroe Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear John:

Thank you for your most recent letter of May 19, 2009 on behalf of the BRAC Implementation Committee concerning the State Highway Administration's proposed Bethesda BRAC intersections improvements project. As always, I appreciate the diligence and commitment of the members of the Committee to offer sound advice on matters relating to BRAC at Navy Med.

Your letter raises excellent points about the general nature of the SHA proposals, and the attached communications from area stakeholders offer valuable specific insights. I especially appreciate the comments submitted by the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors, who clearly have spent a lot of time and thought on evaluating the proposals block-by-block.

As it studies short-term traffic relief, I believe SHA is obliged to study the entire range of potential mitigations that could be implemented. However, I do not believe it was in the community's best interest to display at the April 2, 2009 Public Workshop all potential mitigations – which were estimated to cost at least \$215 million – with no realistic expectation of having nearly that level of funding in place to implement them. The State has programmed only \$45 million for the project but has reduced the actual budget to \$39 million, and recently announced revenue shortfalls threaten to further reduce the project's budget. Nevertheless, the plans SHA displayed anticipated encroachments on residential neighborhoods and the taking of private property at several of the intersections, including eliminating several homes – prospects that engendered fear and anxiety among many area residents. I do not believe such a display was the responsible thing to do since there is almost no chance that most, if any, property will actually be taken.

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While I do believe it is essential that short-term mitigations be implemented to address the onslaught of traffic we know BRAC will bring us by September 2011, I firmly believe these mitigations must be done in a manner that conforms to our long-established goals of community livability. I further believe that we need to abide by a long-term vision that stresses mobility and alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. I am heartened by the progress we are making towards the renovation and enhancement of pedestrian and bike paths in the area, and I look forward to good news about federal funding for the pedestrian access project at the Medical Center Metro station.

It is my understanding that SHA will soon be submitting a significantly revised set of plans. Long term goals should not be abandoned to accommodate short term strategies. I will continue to monitor the SHA proposals with these goals in mind, and will be mindful of the BRAC Implementation Committee's well-reasoned recommendations.

I appreciate your steadfast dedication to this task.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isiah Leggett', written in a cursive style.

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive